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## **NNSA's Life Extension Program Meets Defense Needs** **Without Testing or New Weapons**

**Life extension refurbishment program completed for W87 warheads**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has completed the first leg of an ambitious program to ensure that the nation's aging nuclear weapons stockpile is capable of meeting national defense requirements without producing new warheads or conducting underground nuclear tests.

NNSA has successfully completed a life extension refurbishment program for the W87 nuclear warhead. The last W87 warhead to be refurbished rolled off the assembly line at the Pantex Plant after undergoing an extensive rebuild. The purpose of the W87 Life Extension Program (LEP) refurbishment is to extend the warhead's life by 30 years and to provide structural enhancements.

"The W87 is an integral part of the nation's strategic defense. Completion of this important life extension program assures the continued safety and reliability of this vital part of the strategic nuclear deterrent," said Dr. Everet Beckner, deputy administrator for defense programs.

The W87 LEP was the first refurbishment program conducted by the NNSA's nuclear weapons complex, and the first program since the early 1990s that featured full utilization of the production complex. NNSA sites that participated in the work included the Pantex Plant, the Y-12 National Security Complex, the Kansas City Plant, the Los Alamos National Laboratory, the Sandia National Laboratories, and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

Beckner said NNSA is taking a proactive approach to warhead refurbishment. Through enhanced surveillance and assessment efforts, NNSA has developed an improved understanding of the effects of aging on warhead safety, security, and reliability. Using this knowledge, NNSA is able to plan refurbishments to replace or fix components systematically, before aging-related changes jeopardize warhead safety or reliability. Other warheads undergoing planned life extension refurbishments include the B61, W76, and W80.

The W87 LEP was authorized by Congress in 1994 and the first rebuilt warhead was delivered back to the Department of Defense in 1999.

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear energy. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; works to reduce global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad.

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